

## CHAPTER 9: MIRACLES □ PART 3

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

"Sometimes", Ramchal states, "G-d ... has those of His servants who are close to Him perform miracles, thus showing His love for them through the abilities that He grants them, and by the authority they have over His creation. Their ability to bring about miracles and wonders depends on how close they are to G-d". The tradition is chock-full of examples.

The first person of that sort to come to mind, of course, is Moses who prompted all the miracles in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the desert which are well known. Other examples would be Elijah and Elisha who also triggered a number of wonders.

Elijah was miraculously fed by ravens at one point (1 Kings 17:6), and we're told of the following miracle that happened soon afterwards. Elijah had asked a widow for food when she said, "I don't have any bread -- only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and to make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die (afterwards from starvation). But Elijah said to her, 'Don't be afraid. Go home ... and make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the L-rd G-d of Israel, says: "The jar of flour will not be used up, and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day that G-d grants rain to the land". She went away and did as Elijah had told her. And there came to be food there every day (miraculously) for Elijah and for the woman and her family" (Ibid. 12-15).

Eliyahu's disciple Elisha predicted that a childless woman with an elderly husband would have a child the following year, which came to be true. Then we're told that "The child grew, and one day he went out to his father, who was with the reapers. "My head! My head (hurts me)!" he said to his father ... After the servant had lifted him up and carried him to his mother, the boy sat on her lap until noon, and then he died." His mother found Elisha and pleaded for his help. "When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch. He went in, shut the door on the two of them and prayed to G-d. Then he got on the bed and lay upon the boy, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands. As he stretched himself out upon him, the boy's body grew warm. Elisha turned away and walked back and forth in the room and then got on the bed and stretched out upon him once more. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes" -- miraculously brought back to life by Elisha (see 2 Kings Ch. 4).

And the Talmud speaks of a certain holy-man, Choni "HaMe'agel", "The Circle-Maker", in reference to the miracle depicted below. We're told that once there was a drought that lasted almost an entire

month. Everyone prayed and prayed to G-d, but to no avail. So the leaders of the town implored Choni to intercede for them in Heaven. He drew a circle on the ground, sat in the midst of it, and prayed for rain. And his prayer was immediately answered. When the rain continued to fall for some time and came down in torrents, and thus threatened to do more harm than good, Choni prayed for it to cease, and that prayer was also answered (Ta'anit 23a).

There are many other such examples, right up to our own age (though those instances aren't publicized). The crux of the matter is that G-d will sometimes extend extraordinary abilities to people close to Him with which they can play a role in His governance of the universe.

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